



Module II

Building the Team: Roles & Responsibilities

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Let's move onto the module 2- Building the Team: Roles and Responsibilities:

It takes a team to effectively respond to the concerns of members and families. In this room, we have volunteers with many talents and abilities. As a Key Spouse, you never have to feel alone or feel like the weight of caring for unit families is your responsibility. The Key Spouse initiative is a Commander's program. This module will clearly help you see how you, and others, work together to form a cohesive team to identify and resolve individual, family, and unit issues. The Key Spouse intervenes at the grassroots level.



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Objectives

- Define the 5 Ws of the KS Program: Unit team roles and responsibilities
 - Discuss team coordination

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This module aims to achieve the following objectives:

- We will define the 5 Ws of the KS Program: Unit team roles and responsibilities; and,
- We will discuss team coordination



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The 5 Ws

- **Who** is on your team?
- **What** is your role?
- **When** do you accomplish your tasks?
- **Where** do you accomplish your tasks?
- **Why** are you important to the Mission?

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The 5 Ws of the KS Program are:

- The first one is “who” that refers to the team’s makeup: Who is on your team?
- The second one is “what” that refers to the role of each team member: What is your role?
- The third one is “when” that refers to the times KSs accomplish their tasks: When do you accomplish your tasks?
- The fourth one is “where” that refers to the places where KSs perform their tasks: Where do you accomplish your tasks?
- The fifth one is “why” that refers to the importance of KSs to the AF/wing/unit mission: Why are you important to the Mission?



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Who is on your team? Unit Commander (CC)

- Establishes and maintains the unit's KS Program
- Selects/appoints/replaces KS
 - Sample appointment letter
- Provides resource support
- Encourages unit family member participation
- Supports KS meetings/functions
- Talks up the KS Program and provides KS support
- Assists KSs to make a smooth transition, and when necessary dismisses KSs
- Attends KS training and discussions as mission allows

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We will start with the first one: Who is on your team?

The number one lead team member is the Unit Commander. Key Spouse is a Commander program. The Unit Commander is the unit leader who:

- Establishes and maintains the unit's Key Spouse Program
- Selects/appoints/replaces Key Spouse. Selection process includes an interview. Appointment and replacements are done in writing.
- You can see a sample letter in your Key Spouse Reference Guide
- Provides resource support
- Encourages unit family member participation
- Supports Key Spouse meetings/functions. Resource support includes office space, supplies and the like.
- Talks up the Key Spouse Program and provides Key Spouse support
- Assists Key Spouse to make a smooth transition, and when necessary dismisses Key Spouses
- Attends Key Spouse training and discussions as mission allows

It should be noted that Key Spouse Program issues should be taken to the unit commander or the First Sergeant. Examples of such issues include conflict between KSs and lack of unit support.



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Who is on your team? First Sergeant (CCF, Shirt)

- Primary KS point of contact
- Link between CC and KS
- Assists in recruiting/selecting KS
- Meets with KSs regularly
- Assists with admin and logistics
- Provides access to updated rosters
- Works for the CC
- Oversees and coordinates unit/family readiness services.

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The second team member is the First Sergeant who:

- The First Sergeant is the primary Key Spouse point of contact. As a Key Spouse contact person, the First Sergeant:
 - deals with field issues and concerns.
 - provides advice and support.
 - advises KS of unit events/activities.
 - ensures resources are available and sufficient.
- Functions as a link between Unit Commander and Key Spouses
- Assists in recruiting/selecting Key Spouses
- Meets with Key Spouses regularly. In addition, the First Sergeant is available any time for an issue.
- Assists with admin and logistics
- Provides access to updated rosters
- Works for the unit commander
- Oversees and coordinates unit/family readiness services.

Overall, First sergeants derive their authority from the Unit Commander. They exercise general supervision over assigned enlisted personnel and are the focal point within the unit for all matters concerning enlisted members. The First Sergeant is a critical link in providing the Commander a mission-ready enlisted force to execute the unit's mission. As the vital link between the Commander, enlisted personnel, and support agencies, the first sergeant must ensure the enlisted force understands the Commander's policies, goals, and objectives and support agencies are responsive to needs of unit personnel. Additionally, the First Sergeant must remain vigilant for, and move to resolve, issues that, left unchecked, would adversely impact troop readiness. First Sergeants accomplish these responsibilities by working closely with their fellow Senior Noncommissioned Officers and line supervisors. The First Sergeant utilizes support agencies to enhance personnel readiness and provide personal assistance to unit members and their families. The First Sergeant must develop a seamless communication structure between the Commander, unit members, and support agencies.



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Who is on your team? KS Mentor (KSM)

- Takes strategic vs. tactical program perspective
- Mentors junior spouses
- Advocates unit concern
- Attends trainings
- Encourages spouse/family interaction with each other/unit
- Recognizes KS contributions
- Focuses on integrating/addressing broader issues.
- Supports the KS
- Hails and Farewells KS

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The next team member is the Key Spouse Mentor. The Key Spouse Mentor is a vital member of the Command's leadership team. Their role and focus is different from that of a Key Spouse in that it is more strategic than tactical. The Key Spouse Mentor is usually the Unit Commander's spouse; however, this position may be held by a senior leader level as designated by the Commander. Key Spouse Mentors focus on broader issues, as they visit with individuals and families. It is important that the Key Spouse Mentor is in a position to mentor and encourage unit families, as well as the Key Spouse. After all, the Key Spouse Mentor is the team member who:

- Takes strategic vs. tactical program perspective. In this respect, the Key Spouse Mentor may send messages to Key Spouse to send to unit with general base or Air Force info.
- Mentors junior spouses
- Advocates unit concern
- Attends trainings
- Encourages spouse/family interaction with each other/unit
- Recognizes Key Spouse contributions
- Focuses on integrating/addressing broader issues.

- Supports the Key Spouse
- Hails and Farewells Key Spouse

It should be noted once more that the Key Spouse Mentor can be the spouse of unit commander, senior officer, senior noncommissioned officer or Department of Defense civilian.



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Who is on your team?

Airman and Family Readiness Center

- Provides oversight and assistance
- Facilitates KS training
- Provides continuing education and training opportunities
- Provides information and referral support

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Airman and Family Readiness Center is the next member on your team. Airman and Family Readiness Center services are tied to mission readiness and retention. Airman and Family Readiness Center:

- Provides oversight and assistance
- Facilitates Key Spouse training
- Provides continuing education and training opportunities
- Provides information and referral support

It is important to remember that Key Spouses may consult with the Airman and Family Readiness Center on any issue.



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Who is on your team? Key Spouse

- Face of unit leadership to families
- Peer-to-peer Wingman support
- Force multiplier

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Finally, KS is the last team member. KS is the member who is:

- The face of unit leadership to families
- A Peer-to-peer Wingman
- A Force multiplier

What is your role as a KS?



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What is your role? Key Spouse

- Provides peer-to-peer Wingman support
- Works directly with First Sergeant
- Link between family and unit leadership
- Shares pertinent information with unit leadership
- Role model for family members
- Establishes and maintains contact with :
 - All unit families
 - Incoming unit family members
 - Deployed members' families

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Your role as a KS includes:

- Providing peer-to-peer Wingman support
- Working directly with First Sergeant
- Being a link between family and unit leadership
- Sharing pertinent information with unit leadership
- Being Role model for family members
- Establishing and maintaining contact with:
 - All unit families
 - Incoming unit family members
 - Deployed members' families

KSs are trained volunteers and are official representatives of the unit. The Key Spouse must be taken seriously. When being asked to brief at squadron functions or represent the squadron, it's important for the Key Spouse to dress appropriately. Appearing at meetings appropriately dressed will enhance credibility as a competent, effective KS.



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What is your role? (Cont'd) **Key Spouse**

- **Keeps current roster/database of unit family members**
- **Visible at unit and A&FRC events**
- **Informs, refers, supports**
- **Maintains professional image at all times**
 - **Reference Protocol handout**
- **Key Spouse Job Description**
- **KS minimum requirements:**
 - **Appointed by the Commander.**
 - **Serves as a minimum of 1 year.**
 - **Attends initial KS training and Suicide Awareness training.**
 - **Participates in annual Suicide Awareness training refresher.**

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The role of a Key Spouse also includes:

- Keeping current roster/database of unit family members
- Being visible at unit and Airman & Family Readiness Center events
- Informing, referring, supporting
- Maintaining professional image at all times. Professional courtesy requires a Key Spouse to address leadership by their proper titles, regardless the relationship. For example, Col. White, Maj. Smith, MSgt. Jones, Ms. Kraft, etc.).
- You can refer to the protocol handout in your Key Spouse Reference Guide
- Key Spouse minimum requirements are as follows:
 - Appointed by the Commander.
 - Serves as a minimum of 1 year.
 - Attends initial Key Spouse training and Suicide Awareness training.
 - Participates in annual Suicide Awareness training refresher.

The Key Spouse job description, in your Key Spouse Reference Guide, is a helpful reference for what the role of a Key Spouse includes. A Key Spouse is an information and referral resource for base, Air Force and national agencies

Moreover, it is important for Key Spouses to receive Suicide Awareness training each year. The long Operations Tempo, warrior training requirements, and changing family dynamics impact family members and families are showing signs of stress.



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Key Spouses Are/Are Not

Are:

- **Volunteers**
- **Trained**
- **Active**
- **Visible**
- **Available**
- **Team players**
- **Conduit of information**
- **Official unit representative**

Are not:

- **Counselors**
- **Babysitters**
- **Taxi drivers**
- **Gossips**
- **Fundraisers**
- **To assume leadership authority**
- **Working alone**
- **A Solver of People's Problems**
- **The Unit's Official Spokesperson**

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Now, let's see who KSs are:

- KSs are trained volunteers for whom initial and annual training required.
- KSs are active and attend:
 - Hail & Farewells.
 - Squadron functions.
 - Spouse's Group functions.
 - Discussion group meetings/training.
- KSs are visible in the sense that:
 - Their names and contact numbers are published in Squadron and Spouse's Newsletters.
 - They are Introduced/Acknowledged at Hails and Farewells, Commander's Calls, Flight Section meetings, etc.
 - They distribute business cards to members/families
- KSs are available:
 - To cultivate relationships within squadron.
 - As a someone a spouse can call to talk with.

- To contact spouses when member is deployed.
- KSs are team players.
- KSs are conduits of information who:
 - Relay information about Unit/A&FRC/base events.
 - Inform family members of base services.
 - Regularly meet with CC and/or First Sergeant.
- KSs are official unit representatives.

As for who “KSs are not”:

- KSs are not counselors who provide spouses other venues such as Life Skills, Chaplains, Military OneSource, A&FRC, etc.
- KSs are not babysitters
- KSs are not taxi drivers
- KSs are not someone who gossips but who respect privacy and dignity
- KSs are not fundraisers
- KSs are not to assume leadership authority. Instead:
 - They communicate verified messages.
 - They are a team player who offers suggestions vice telling leadership what/how to do their jobs.
- KSs are not people who are working alone but who partner with Leadership/A&FRC/base agencies.



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When and Where Do You Accomplish Your Tasks?

- Meetings/events
 - Official and unofficial
 - Scheduled and unscheduled
 - Formal and informal
- Home office
- Unit office (if available)
- Anywhere

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When and where do Key Spouses accomplish their tasks? Key Spouses can perform their volunteer duties:

- At meetings/events including
 - Official and unofficial ones
 - Scheduled and unscheduled ones, and
 - Formal and informal ones

Examples would be base, wing, group, unit or Airman & Family Readiness Center events, and Unit Commander calls.

They can also accomplish their tasks:

- In their home offices
- If available, in their unit offices
- At the commissary
- At the Base Exchange

In other words, they can perform anywhere. The only required tool for Key Spouses to accomplish their tasks is a telephone.



So, all in all, Key Spouses are important to the mission. Air Force spouses have always helped each other. The current climate brings additional stressors, and makes community connections vital to warfighter and family morale. So, it's important that we stay connected with each other and the unit, now more than ever. The challenges that Airmen and their families face at times can be intense. The traditional support system such as immediate and extended families are not within reach for the most part. Employment is limited at some bases, and for those who used to be a dual income family, the change in financial status may be a challenge. Despite all these:

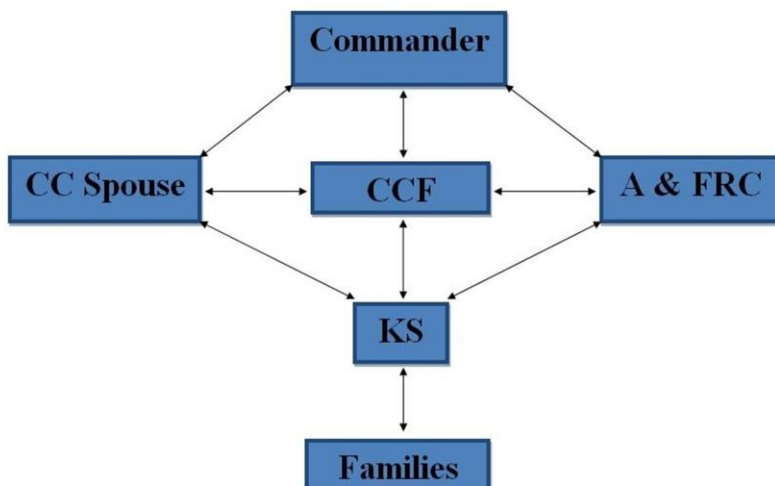
- The Key Spouse is a sounding board, advocate, and an information and referral resource.
- Key Spouses offer an additional safety net and demonstrate the command structure cares for families.

You provide a communication network to keep families linked to the mission by establishing a sense of community. The result of Key Spouses' hard work is that families express a sense of belonging evident by their self-sufficiency, resiliency, and readiness.



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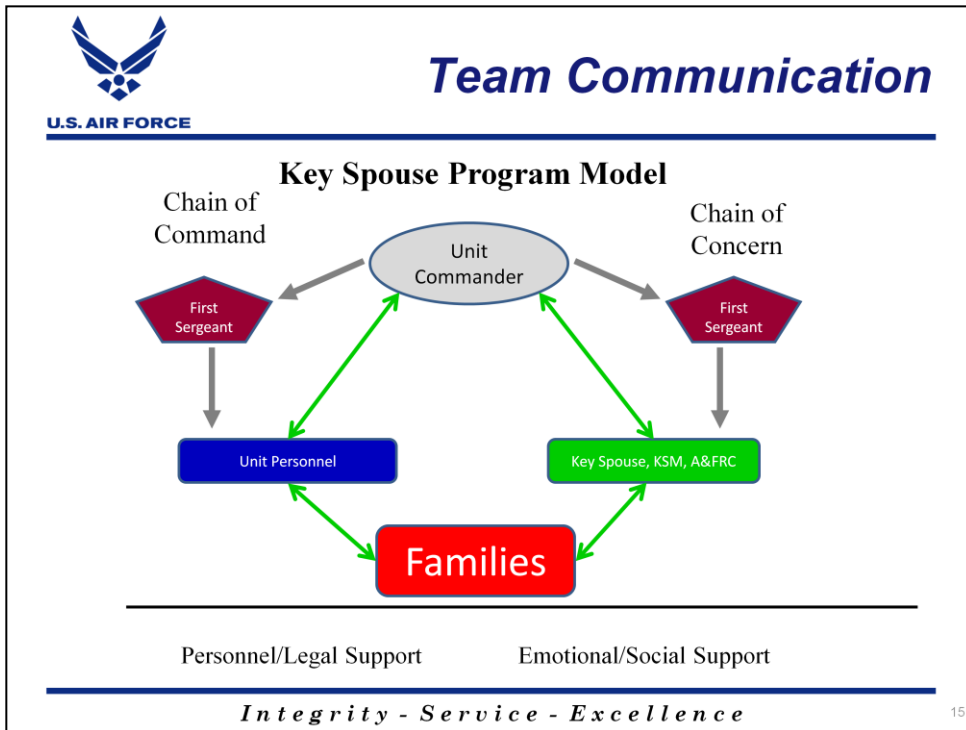
Unit Team



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On this slide, we see the unit team diagram. Key Spouses function just like a bridge between the unit and families. They are information sharers within the chain of communication.



Here is the chain of information. Key Spouses ensure families receive the highest level of peer support at every installation. Strong family means strong community! All these make Key Spouses a valued member of the leadership team.

Resources link people and the community together. The next module will acquaint you with local, regional, and national resources.